

NER EEODAC
MINUTES OF THE MEETING
June 7, 2000

The NERO Equal Employment Opportunity/Diversity Advisory Committee (EEODAC) held a conference call on June 7, 2000 at 2:00 PM. Conference call participants were: L. Stehlik - Sandy Hook; S. Babson-Pike - New Bedford/Gloucester; K. Chu, H. Fletcher, L. Hendrickson, D. Hart, P. Smith, G. Liles, J. Quintal - Woods Hole; C. Matteus - Gloucester. The Committee adopted the following agenda which was the same as was set for the May meeting (cancelled due to lack of quorum):

1. Status reports:
 - A. Minutes of last (April) meeting (Comments due 5/10)
 - B. Administration Sub-committee (anything to report?)
 - C. Personnel Sub-committee (any progress revising workplans per April's meeting?)
 - D. Policy Sub-committee (any progress revising workplans?)
 - E. Program sub-committee (what are our goals for "outreach"? any progress revising workplans?)
2. Diversity Initiatives
 - A. Formation of Diversity Sub-groups by location (has each group met? What actions are being contemplated? Who is the contact point?)
3. Review of NERO and NEFSC Workforces (How can we continue the effort to collect and analyze the EEO statistics compiled by Lisa?)
4. Organizational matters
 - A. conference call structure (Do we all have to be on all the calls, or can we delegate the calls to the location representative and the Sub-Committee Chairs?)
 - B. Conference calls vs meetings (When should we meet again?)
5. Other Business

The Committee postponed adoption of April minutes to allow one more week for comments. If there are no comments after a week, K. Chu will consider them adopted. The committee then proceeded with reports from each sub-committee Chair.

1. Status Reports

Policy Sub-committee:

Workplan 1: The sub-committee proposed to: (1) gather and review existing EEO statistics specific to the NEFSC and the NERO, and (2) prepare a report regarding the data collection methodology, accuracy, and summarization of these statistics with respect to EEO policies.) Although the deputy directors placed low priority on this proposal, it was agreed that it would continue to work on a plan to compile improved statistics of personnel hiring. Perhaps a concise summary of statistics and pie charts could be compiled each year by the Statistics Branch's

Anthropologist for posting and/or presentation to the Directorate. Will discuss with Phil Logan. The committee recommended that NERO make a greater effort to compile substantive and quantifiable data about its compliance with EEO and NOAA's Affirmative Action Plans. The Chair agreed to forward this recommendation to Jon Rittgers.

Workplan 2: The sub-committee proposed to review relevant NMFS and NOAA plans to implement EEO and to manage diversity. The proposed workplan calls for (1) the collection of EEO and diversity implementation plans, (2) the review of such plans by EEODAC members, and (3) summarizing comments on the plans for inclusion in the annual EEO reports of the region.

Included with above Workplan 1.

Workplan 3: The sub-committee proposed to work with the Personnel Sub-committee to determine how the hiring process incorporates EEO policy.

See Personnel Sub-Committee report below.

Personnel Sub-committee:

Workplan 1: The Personnel Sub-committee proposed to study hiring practices with the goal of increasing the diversity within NERO/NEFSC by first investigating the applicant pools to see if groups are under-represented in the pools and, if needed, to compile a list of "tools" to increase the applicant pools.

Hold supervisors more accountable for proper and broad advertizing of positions. Perhaps EEODAC members should meet and brainstorm with supervisors to come up with a check list of steps to take for hiring.

Workplan 2: The sub-committee proposed to work with EASC to make the present job application process less cumbersome and intimidating.

Committee discussed the new "Commerce Opportunities On Line" or C.O.O.L. automated system which makes federal job announcement and application available on the WEB. Pie Smith also stated that job postings are placed on the general bulletin board outside the mailroom every Tuesday.

Workplan 3: The sub-committee proposed to suggest that a mentor be assigned to new, lower-grade professional employees to provide historical, professional advice. Also, a junior-level rotational assignment program should be developed.

This workplan was approved in concept, but the sub-committee was asked to develop the concepts further. Incorporating this program with the summer student hires was discussed. The program should insure that one mentor per student is assigned. A mentor would be someone to address any problems that might arise with a student's project or work relations, and would be a source of support and information. A task force was formed to further develop the idea of a mentoring program. Pie Smith will head the task force which will include Lisa Hendrickson. Pie Smith will try to find a supervisor to participate on the task force.

Administration Sub-Committee:

Nothing new to report

Program Sub-Committee:

Workplan 1: The sub-committee proposed to organize, implement, and continue with outreach programs that increase awareness of NOAA Fisheries in the local community of each laboratory or the regional office building.

The sub-committee was asked to develop this idea further. Heather Fletcher will redraft the workplan and its justification. The committee plans to target community and minority institutions. It was agreed that the goals of outreach programs should be described in terms of diversity. The Chairman plans to consult with Carolyn Stile.

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Previously, the sub-committee had been asked to modify this workplan to focus on ways to encourage current NMFS employees to take advantage of scholarships and other arrangements that encourage employees to continue with their studies. After discussion by the committee and Kevin's consultation with John Boreman and Carolyn Stiles, this focus will be secondary to the original proposal to focus on minorities and disadvantaged. It was suggested to contact local community high school guidance offices, and teenage sports and recreational clubs for outreach to kids. A list is being compiled of various scholarship opportunities particularly in the marine science field. Linda Stehlik will redraft the workplan and its justification.

Workplan 3: The sub-committee proposed to review present mechanisms for addressing access issues in the Region and Center.

This was approved, provided the sub-committee work closely with EASC and the facility managers at each location. The sub-committee Chair (H. Fletcher) will attend a workshop on handicap access in Boston on June 20, 2000.

2. Diversity Initiatives

The EEODAC decided that each facility should form its own diversity subcommittee, which would be responsible for developing activities at that location to encourage better management of diversity. Gloucester chapter of the Diversity Sub-committee reported that they are developing a long-term diversity training program to be taught by the National Coalition Building Institute. They are planning a lunchtime video and discussion of the life and career of Capt. Matthew Healy, U.S.C.G., Alaska. The Woods Hole chapter will once again help to organize the annual employee picnic and will encourage folks to contribute a food dish that represents their native culture and heritage. They also plan a meeting for Monday June 12, to discuss and analyze perceived problems of unfairness of awards and lack of opportunity for career advancement in some sectors of the NEFSC workforce.

3. Review of NERO and NEFSC Workforces

After presenting an analysis of EEO statistics gathered from the Center and the Regional Office,

compared to overall figures for the NMFS workforce, at the April Mtg., the committee had agreed to address and try to provide advice on the following specific issues:

- 1. Is there evidence that a “glass ceiling” exists?*
- 2. Are we making appropriate hiring decisions from an EEO point of view?*
- 3. Are there trends relating to hiring and retention of women and minorities in both the Center and the Regional Office?*
- 4. Recommended that the Regional Office increase significantly its efforts to collect data to monitor its performance under the Equal Employment Opportunity Act and the NOAA diversity plan.*

[See Policy Committee Workplan 1. above].

4. Organizational matters, Conference Calls

The EEODAC agreed that the monthly conference calls continue to be open to all committee members rather than to assign a single person from each location and the sub-committee chairs to participate. It was agreed that the present arrangement helps to maintain the committee’s energy and provides a better platform for group dynamics, committee ideas and brainstorming. The committee also agreed to try to meet twice a year, in October and April. The committee then discussed need for development of logistics and an agenda for a semi-annual meeting to take place sometime in October. The Chairman and Administrative Committee will look into a place and time for a 2-day meeting. It was agreed that an ambitious and rigid agenda should be planned for the meeting including a discussion about end-of-year election of officers and soliciting of new members.

5. Other Business

After discussion of the EEODAC’s web-site development, the Chairman agreed that we should solicit support from Edgar Kleindinst in DMS. He requested that the committee provide electronic versions of EEODAC by-laws, member rosters, approved workplans along with photos, upcoming events and suggested links be provided to G. Liles.